Mr. KERRY, proposes an amendment numbered 4173.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To provide additional funding resources in FY2009 for investments in innovation and education in order to improve the competitiveness of the United States)

On page 11, line 13, increase the amount by $600,000,000.

On page 11, line 14, increase the amount by $306,000,000.

On page 11, line 18, increase the amount by $210,000,000.

On page 11, line 22, increase the amount by $60,000,000.

On page 12, line 1, increase the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 12, line 5, increase the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 27, line 16, decrease the amount by $600,000,000.

On page 27, line 17, decrease the amount by $306,000,000.

On page 27, line 21, decrease the amount by $210,000,000.

On page 27, line 25, decrease the amount by $60,000,000.

On page 28, line 4, decrease the amount by $12,000,000.

On page 28, line 8, decrease the amount by $12,000,000.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, this is an amendment I am offering on behalf of myself, Senator ALEXANDER, Senator KENNEDY, Senator DOMENICI, Senator MIKULSKI, Senator ENSIGN, and others to offer an amendment to the budget resolution to do two things: to fund the Office of Science within the Department of Energy and also to fund the National Science Foundation at the fiscal year 2009 funding levels that have been proposed in the President's budget.

Last year, on a bipartisan basis, Congress passed the COMPETES Act. I compliment my colleague, who is here on the floor with me today, Senator ALEXANDER, for his leadership in that legislation. This was bipartisan legislation. It was strongly endorsed by Members of the Senate. It authorized a number of programs based upon the recommendations that came from the National Academies report entitled ''Rising Above the Gathering Storm.''

Specifically, the COMPETES Act authorized a doubling of the budgets for the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy's Office of Science over a period of 7 years. The Office of Science and the National Science Foundation are the two principal agencies charged with maintaining the nondefense basic science enterprise of our Nation, which serves as the wellspring for future innovation and for our global competitiveness.

For the Office of Science, the America COMPETES Act authorized a 12-percent increase relative to fiscal year 2007. The President's Advanced Competitiveness Initiative would have increased the Office of Science by 7.2 percent. For the National Science Foundation, the COMPETES Act authorized a 12-percent increase as compared to the President's Advanced Competitiveness Initiative proposed increase of 9.3 percent.

The COMPETES Act was passed into law last August. At that time, the appropriations bills in both Chambers kept the funding levels for both offices I am speaking about here at or above the President's request. But by the time the Congress made the deep cuts that were required by the administration in order to get an omnibus spending bill passed in December, all of the gains that had earlier been in appropriations bills for the Office of Science and for the National Science Foundation were lost, and both of those offices were flat funded when you account for inflation.

Let me talk a few minutes about why these two programs are so important to our ability to compete globally. As noticed in the President's budget, the National Science Foundation is the principal source of Federal support for strengthening science and math education. Education and human resource programs at the National Science Foundation support technological innovation to enhance economic competitiveness and new job growth. They address the workforce needs of the country. They help to ensure a pool of talented experts. Many of these programs are critical to developing and advancing the knowledge of our country's K through 12 math and science teachers as well.

When we passed the America COMPETES Act, we recognized that this country is facing a critical shortage in well-prepared math and science teachers. Accordingly, we significantly expanded the Robert Noyce Scholarship program, which prepares science, technology, engineering, and mathematics undergraduate students and professionals to become math and science teachers. Among a number of changes, we required increased collaboration between science and education faculty to establish STEM teacher education programs—STEM, of course, refers to science, technology, engineering, and math teachers—and increased scholarships and stipends to at least $10,000 per year, for up to 3 years of scholarship support, beginning with the junior year.

We also increased funding significantly in order to meet these objectives. Congress anticipated that the Noyce program would grow to become a major source of effective training for our science, technology, engineering, and mathematics teachers. Research shows that students' performance on annual math and science assessments improved in almost every age group when their schools were involved in a program that linked K through 12 teachers with their colleagues in higher education.

The Math and Science Partnership I am referring to helps forge these connections between K through 12 and higher education to strengthen math and science teaching skills, improve curriculum, and provide college preparatory programs for students.

The Office of Science at the Department of Energy also makes significant contributions to math and science education. Among the things the America COMPETES Act authorizes for the Department of Science are: to help establish statewide specialty schools in math and science; to get middle and high school students around the State involved in national laboratories through internship programs; and to require the national laboratories to partner with local school districts and to adopt at least one high-need high school and transform these schools into centers of excellence in mathematics and science.

This is only a small part of what the Office of Science does. Simply put, it provides the support for much of the basic scientific research that will drive the industries of the future. It funds facilities that help us understand the basics of materials, funds research into such critical areas as biogenetic sequencing, and provides support for much of the physical sciences enterprise in this country.

Once again, for fiscal year 2009, the President has come forward proposing increases for both the National Science Foundation and the Office of Science. Relative to fiscal year 2008, the President's proposed budget increase for these two agencies amounts to $1.4 billion. This amount would not bring the levels for these two agencies to the full level we authorized in the America COMPETES Act for fiscal year 2009, but they are a substantial step in the right direction, and I strongly support these increases.

So the amendment my cosponsors and I are offering today adds another $600 million to the budget resolution, as reported by the Committee on the Budget, to at least meet the level the President has indicated he is willing to support. I believe this addition to the budget resolution can and should command broad bipartisan support in the Senate, just as the America COMPETES Act was broadly supported on a bipartisan basis here in the Senate.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment. I know my colleague from Tennessee is here to speak in favor of it as well. I again compliment him for his leadership on the issue.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the Senator from New Mexico, Mr. BINGAMAN, has been tireless in helping to create the America COMPETES Act, which passed unanimously here. But even more important than that, he did not walk away from it once it became law. He has attended to the details of trying to make sure we implement it. One of those details is what we are doing today.